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### The Notion of Complexity in the Study of Interest-Group Pluralism

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THE NOTION OF COMPLEXITY  
IN THE STUDY OF INTEREST-GROUP  
PLURALISM

William Jeffers  
May, 1977

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to develop the notion of complexity as a conceptual tool for a comparative analysis of the proponents and critics of Interest-Group Pluralism. The primary question I will attempt to answer concerns the ways in which these proponents and critics differ in respect to their conceptions of (a) analytical complexity, (b) descriptive complexity and, (c) prescriptive complexity.

Important to note at the outset of this essay are its limitations. First, it is not possible to cover all of the proponents and critics of Interest-Group Pluralism in this essay, for the amount of literature is massive. What I will attempt to cover is a sampling of those so-called "pluralists" and "anti-pluralists" who concern themselves with urban and community politics.

Second, the terms "pluralist" and "anti-pluralist" used to describe two categories of political analysis have some difficulties. The terms are primarily used in this essay for the sake of clarity.

Third, although pluralists differ from anti-pluralists in many ways, I have chosen to discuss these differences in

terms of complexity. I do not intend to imply that the use of the notion of complexity is the only way, or even the best way, to differentiate these two categories of political analysis.

Fourth, because the emphasis of this essay is on the differentiation between pluralists and anti-pluralists, it is not possible to cover all the salient issues concerning the notion of complexity. I will attempt to focus on those aspects of complexity which I believe are the most relevant to the pluralist/anti-pluralist controversy.

For the purposes of this essay, the term "complexity" will be used to describe the extent to which the following factors are maximized:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) the number of units, (size)
- (2) the differentiation of these units, (differentiation)
- (3) the incidence of relational interdependencies among these units, (interdependence)

(a) the overlapping of units performing different functions

(b) the incidence of functional redundancy among these units

*these  
conflict*

- (4) the variability of the above factors over time, (variability)

The term "simplicity" will be used to describe the extent to which the above factors are minimized.

The operationalization of the notion of complexity is

somewhat problematic in that the factors of complexity are non-additive. McFarland contends:

If one system has fewer components, but greater interdependence and variability (i.e., changes in degree of differentiation over time), than another, it would be difficult or impossible to determine which system is more complex, unless the system with fewer variables is identical to a subsystem of a second system.<sup>2</sup>

McFarland goes on to assert that in order to compare systems on the basis of complexity, we must demonstrate that "one system exhibits a greater magnitude than the other on all three dimensions of complexity."<sup>3</sup>

LaPorte argues (and I agree) that McFarland is overly impressed with the difficulties in comparing the degree of complexity in different systems. Although the non-additive quality of complexity does make comparisons methodologically tricky, it should not present an insurmountable problem in operationalizing the notion of complexity to differentiate political analyses.<sup>4</sup>

Important to note is that the notions of complexity and simplicity are abstractions and should be viewed as opposite ends on a theoretical continuum.

The heuristic advantage in distinguishing between complexity and simplicity is the explication of the conceptual possibility of either case; it is not to quantify the relative degree of complexity in order to compare it with another structure.

This essay will be divided into four sections to discuss the relevancy of four distinct categories of complexity/

simplicity to the political analyses of pluralists and anti-pluralists. These four categories are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

- (1) structures of political interaction (structural complexity)
- (2) variables or concepts used in political analysis (analytic complexity)
- (3) description of structures of interaction (descriptive complexity)
- (4) prescriptions for structures of interaction (prescriptive complexity)

While others have used slightly different categories to analyse complexity, I believe that these categories make for the most useful distinction between pluralists and anti-pluralists.

In the first section on structural complexity, I will analyse the theoretical possibility of complexity in concrete structures of interaction. While this theoretical analysis of structural complexity is abstract, the importance of it is to conceptualize the constituent factors of complexity/simplicity. These factors will be utilized in the discussions of the other three aspects of complexity.

In the second section, the discussion on analytic complexity will deal with two aspects of complexity in political analyses: (1) the number and differentiation of variables or concepts used in political analyses, and (2) the complexity/simplicity of the structure of analytical frameworks.

The first aspect will be used to describe the methodological complexity of a particular analysis; the second, the complexity of structures of analytical frameworks of a particular category of analysis. In this context, pluralists and anti-pluralists will be examined both in terms of particular analyses and of the structure of pluralist and anti-pluralist analytical frameworks.

In the third section, the distinction will be made between the descriptions of the political process as seen in the works of pluralists and anti-pluralists. It will be useful to distinguish between what I have termed "descriptive pluralists" and "descriptive anti-pluralists". The former describes the political process as being relatively complex; the latter, as being relatively simple.

In the fourth section, the distinction between "descriptive" and "prescriptive" pluralists and anti-pluralists will be clarified. Here again, prescriptive pluralist prescribes complexity for the political process; while the prescriptive anti-pluralist prescribes simplicity. While it may be sometimes difficult to distinguish the difference between the normative judgments and the descriptions of the political process made by particular political analysts, I will attempt to make this differentiation as clear as possible.

It is important to note that I do not intend to make any overt judgments on the verity of the pluralist or anti-pluralists arguments; rather, I intend to demonstrate how trade-offs

are made when the political scientist embarks on an analysis of the political process. While this argument will be developed throughout this essay, it is important to note that the method of approaching concrete structures of interaction affects the complexity/simplicity of description of these structures.



## Section 1: STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY

The term "structural complexity" is used here to signify the extent to which the factors of complexity are manifested in concrete structures of interaction. The first factor, the size of the structure, is determined by the number of individuals performing roles.<sup>1</sup> However, the number of people performing roles is only one aspect of structural complexity. In the case of a large typing pool, for example, where all the individuals are typing form letters, we would not consider this structure complex, for they are all performing the same role.

### STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY--DIFFERENTIATION

The differentiation of roles within the structure is the second factor of structural complexity. The maximization of the differentiation implies the multiplicity of different functional roles, activities, etc., which are performed within the structure.<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that the way in which an individual performs a role does not alter the role itself; rather, the individual acts within the confines of the role. The constraints of that role become more of a factor as the role becomes more formalized within an institutional structure.

In informal structures, we may say that the prescribed activities of the roles are largely determined by the individual. In formal structures, on the other hand, the activities of the role are largely prescribed by the institution. That institutional structures have both formal and informal characteristics makes the importance of the prescribed functions

of the role and of the performance of that function by the individual a matter of emphasis. Differentiation of roles, then, is determined both by the prescribed activities of the role and by the individual performing the role.

A common argument, made by theorists analysing the notion of complexity, states that the maximization of the differentiation of roles denotes the minimization of the functional redundancy of these roles. However, this argument appears to be fallacious, for two reasons. The first reason is derived from the assumption stated above that the individual performing a role alters the function of that role. In this way, the prescribed function of the role, itself, is the same when it is ascribed to two individuals, but the way in which the function is carried out may be different.

The second reason is derived from the common usage of the safety mechanisms. If the prescribed function of a role is considered important, it is unlikely that one person will be entrusted with the complete responsibility of that functional role. Examples of these safety mechanisms are manifold. To use a mechanistic reference, additional features of a highly complex machine are often used to ensure that the primary function of that machine is performed. These "safety mechanisms" are utilized when a part of the machine breaks down. In an example found in nature, we see that when one species becomes extinct, another species takes its place in the food chain.

While I could certainly be wrong in my observation, it appears that theorists analysing the notion of complexity have incorrectly omitted the concept of redundancy in their definitions of complexity. Their defini-

tions of complexity imply rigidity and fragility which may not properly be connoted with the use of the term complexity.

#### STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY--INTERDEPENDENCE

The third factor of structural complexity involves the incidence of relational interdependencies among actors performing roles. By the term "interdependence," the essential implication to be made concerns the mutual exercise of power among individuals performing roles within the organized structure.

The term "power" is used to describe the ability of one individual or group to overcome the resistance of another individual or group. The amount of power ascribed to an individual or group is relative to that held by other individuals or groups, for the active utilization of power involves some kind of relationship between individuals or groups.<sup>3</sup>

Since the conception of power exists only in relationships between individuals or groups, there are three necessary conditions existent in any power relationship. First, there must be an initial conflict of interest or value between two or more persons or groups. If there were no conflict, there would be no resistance to be overcome, and there would be no need for the utilization of power in that relationship. Second, the power relationship can only exist if at least one of the parties possesses power assets---the ability to invoke sanctions, to promise rewards, and to suppress or change opinions. In any power relationship, any one, or a combination of these abilities, are utilized. Third, the power relationship only exists when persons possessing power assets utilize them in

overcoming resistance. When these power assets are not utilized, there is only the existence of latent power.<sup>4</sup>

Three types of power relationships are classified by Etzioni as "coercive", "utilitarian", and "normative".<sup>5</sup> Coercive power involves the threatening or the use of violent intervention with the actual use of physical force. Although the threatening of the use of force is analytically distinct from its actual usage, both are included in this type of power relationship. When violence is threatened, the individual subjected to this type of power has the choice of compliance or non-compliance with the demands of the individual making the threat. However, when force is directly utilized, the individual subjected to this force no longer has this choice.<sup>6</sup>

Utilitarian power is activated when assets, such as "economic possessions, technical and administrative capabilities, manpower, etc." are utilized to generate support of a particular line of action. This type of power involves the rewarding or the penalizing of the subjected individual. His choice to comply is contingent upon the perceived necessity or advantages of these rewards.<sup>7</sup>

A normative power relationship involves both the usage of persuasion and influence to further a particular action. "Persuasive power is exercised through the manipulation of symbols, such as appeals to the values and sentiments of the citizens, in order to mobilize support and to penalize those who deviate."<sup>8</sup> This type of persuasion is considered a form of power in that it lessens the resistance to a particular action.<sup>9</sup>

The use of influence does not rely on the threatened usage of sanctions or rewards to overcome resistance; rather, it relies upon "an

authentic change in the actor's preferences."<sup>10</sup> Unlike the use of persuasion, where the individual suppresses his "will" to comply with the demands made upon him, through the use of influence the individual redefines his preferences.

Every concrete usage of power consists in the usage of one or a combination of these categories of power relationship.<sup>11</sup> However, the predominate use of one of these categories of power will have effects upon the stratification or interdependence of those concrete structures of interaction. Etzioni argues that as the power relationships become more coercive and less normative, hierarchical patterns of organization are more prevalent. As these relationships become more normative, the level of formal, social ranking will decrease and mobility will increase.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, if Etzioni is correct in his observation, the prevailing type of power relationships will have an effect upon the incidence of mutual dependencies. While we are not in a position to fully argue this point, it is important to note that the more roles exercising power of each type, the greater the incidence of interdependencies.

It is useful in our analysis of structural interdependence to analyse the various ways in which different factors affect the incidence of relational interdependencies.

The first factor which affects incidence of these relational interdependencies is size. Taking the example of two people who desire one resource, the complexity of the structure is determined by the extent to which they are mutually dependent. If the structure is hierarchical in nature, the power relationship is asymmetrical in that the flow of dependencies is unidirectional. One might say in this case that an indi-

vidual A, through an asymmetrical power relationship with another individual, B, gets B to do something he would not otherwise do. However, B cannot get A to do anything he would not otherwise do. This simple power relationship is then considered unidirectional and asymmetrical.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the simplicity of the power relationship in this case is determined by the lack of mutual dependencies.

While still considering the relationship between two people and one resource, relatively complex forms of mutual dependencies could be described in the following manner:<sup>14</sup>

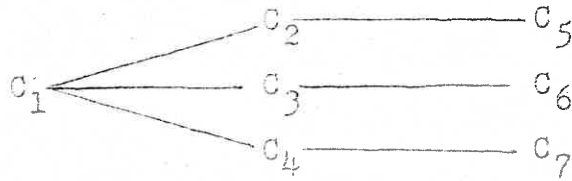
- (1) Member A dominant over member B, i.e., B depends on A for some resource,  $(A \gg B)$
- (2) A and B mutually dependent upon one another for a resource both parties desire,  $(A \ll \gg B)$
- (3) B dominant over A,  $(A \ll B)$

When these cases are taken as a whole, we can say that the two individuals are mutually dependent upon each other. However, more complex types of interdependence are more commonly found in concrete structures of interaction. As a rule, when the size is increased, the number of dependencies increases. An example of this is found in a simple hierarchy.

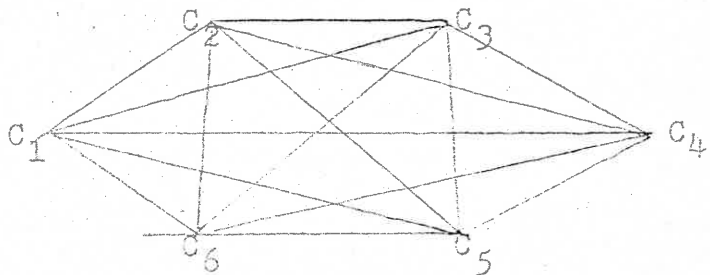
A simple hierarchy, or a "tree of dependence" occurs:

if, and only if, all elements in the collection are directly or indirectly connected to a simple superordinate element and elements are only directly or indirectly connected with each other through a common superordinate element.<sup>15</sup>

LaPorte uses the following illustration to demonstrate this simple hierarchy where the dependence of elements is upon one superordinate element.<sup>16</sup>



A "full matrix of dependence" represent a theoretical structure of interaction where all members within the structure are mutually dependent. This form of reciprocal interdependence between all members is illustrated in the following matrix:<sup>17</sup>



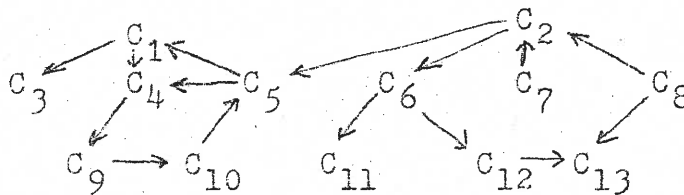
While it is theoretically possible to integrate any number of members into a full-matrix, it is unreasonable, in a practical sense, to attempt to directly relate this type of theoretical matrix to a relatively large concrete structure of human interaction. In the example of an organization where each individual had to consult with each of the thousand other members of that organization in order to perform his particular function, it seems obvious that little, if anything, could be done within these constraints. The salient question which emerges from this example concerns the possibility of reciprocal interdependencies of all members of the structure. While a complete answer to this question may be practically impossible, some attempts in this field have been made.<sup>18</sup>

If reciprocal interdependence does have a practical limitation in the number of members that can be functionally incorporated into the

structural organization, a third type of interdependence may be more realizable in concrete structures of human interaction. This type, the "semi-lattice of dependence" is formally defined by LaPorte in the following manner:

A collection of elements forms a semi-lattice if, and only if, any single element in the collection may be connected directly to any other single element and no single element is in a superordinate relation to all other elements.<sup>19</sup>

LaPorte uses a figure similar to the following to illustrate this type of interdependence:



Thus, we can see that the increase in size of a concrete structure of interaction allows for an increase in the possible number of relational interdependencies.

The second factor, the maximization of the differentiation of functions performed within the structure may promote the increase of the incidence of relational interdependencies. This can be demonstrated by the example of the functioning of a city council. If, the council had only one function to perform to decide whether or not an hospital should be built--there would be relatively few functions performed--relatively few relational interdependencies. This can be shown by describing the functions of members within the structure. Member A is an accountant who is a specialist in the financing of hospitals. Having no special expertise in hospital financing other members of the council would be dependent upon



Member A for his knowledge. Member B has had a great deal of experience in the politics of financing hospitals and is able to account for the difficulties of going through the political process. Member C is a community organizer who expresses the great need for a public hospital to accommodate the lower income groups. The other members of the council have only gone to hospitals when they were sick.

Members A, B, and C, have some expertise in the field of hospital financing and politics, and the other members of the council are dependent upon this knowledge. However, members A, B, and C are all interdependent because each depends on the other two for a certain knowledge which he lacks. These members are also dependent upon the other members of the council to vote affirmatively on this issue in order to have the hospital built. Thus, we can see that the mutual dependencies are relatively well defined and the incidences of these relationships is relatively small.

However, if this council had to act upon other issues--public housing, welfare payments, etc.,--relational interdependencies would become more numerous.

Rather than further complicate this example, we can see that as the functions of the structure become more numerous and more differentiated, the incidence of mutual interdependencies <sup>may</sup> increase.

Second, the incidence of overlapping function is defined by the extent to which any one individual has different functions to perform. By having these different functions, any one individual will have different dependencies within various groups within the structure. The maximization of this incidence of overlapping functions increases the complexity of the structure by increasing the number of relational interdependencies without

affecting the number of members within the structure. The extent to which an individual has more functions to perform may increase the extent to which he can affect the structure.

By referring to our example of the structure of the city council, we can see that by having an expertise in hospital financing, Member A was able to have an impact upon the decision made by the council. He is also the manager of a grocery store in the downtown area. With the knowledge he acquired through his trade, he can be influential in the council's decisions on food stamps and on urban renewal. Thus, by his practical knowledge of some of the aspects of the effects of an expansion of the food stamp program and of the effects of urban renewal on the business community in the downtown area, he may be influential in the decisions made in these issue areas. As long as he is actively involved in the decisions made in these areas, instead of just the decision on the building of the hospital, he is performing different functions with the structure and has a wider impact on the decisions made by the council.

Third, the maximization of functional redundancy increases the incidence of relational interdependencies. Functional redundancy occurs when two or more individuals perform a similar function. By so doing, they decrease the vulnerability of the structure and the dysfunctioning of any particular role performed by a member of the structure. The effect of the functional redundancy may be explained by referring to our example of the city council again.

Member F has had experience in financing public housing. While he is not an expert in the field of financing hospitals, he is able to verify the accounting methods of Member A when the decision is made on the con-

struction of the hospital. If for some reason member A is not able to account for factors influencing aspects of hospital construction, member F will be able to perform A's function.

Thus the effect of functional redundancy is similar to that of overlapping functions in that both increase the incidence of relational interdependencies of the structure as a whole.

#### STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY--CONCLUSION

What I have attempted to point out in this section are the conceptual possibilities of complexity/simplicity of concrete structures of interaction. Many of the topics dealt with are elusive and sometimes difficult to grasp. My intent is not to conclusively prove anything; rather, it is to merely be provocative.

The aspects of structural complexity which I have attempted to cover are the factors of size, differentiation, interdependence, functional redundancy and overlapping functions. A factor of complexity which I have omitted is that of variability over time. While this factor is certainly as important as the others, we may, for the purposes of analysis, separate this factor from the others to develop a conceptual picture of organized complexity at a specific moment. However, our conceptual picture will necessarily be artificial; and it cannot be completely relevant to concrete structures of interaction until it has included the factor of change over time.

## SECTION TWO:

ANALYTIC COMPLEXITY

This discussion of the factors of analytic complexity will be separated into two parts. The first part will cover some of the more salient issues concerning the limitation of the political analyst in perceiving, conceptualizing and describing the complexity of concrete structures of interaction. This discussion is important for the debate between pluralists and anti-pluralists in that the latter has criticized the former for oversimplifying their methods of observing the political process.

The second part will briefly point out the differences in degree of complexity of the structures of analytic frameworks of the pluralists and anti-pluralists.

## LIMITATIONS OF ANALYTIC COMPLEXITY

The complexity of political analyses is contingent upon the number and differentiation of variables and concepts used to describe the structures of political interaction and concrete behavior.<sup>1</sup> The central issue to be developed here is the explication of the limitations which circumscribe the perceptions of the political observer. While the difficulty of separating the "objective reality" which the observer perceives and the subjective preconceptions which skew these perceptions should be obvious, the intent of this explication of the limitations of the political observer is to demonstrate the ways in which these limitations simplify the diversities of the political process.<sup>2</sup>

Primarily, human deficiencies of observation and comprehensibility of perceptions limit the number of variables which can be analyzed by any one political observer. In his article, "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information", George Miller posits the conclusion that human beings possess a rather small capacity for making absolute judgments concerning the differentiation of unidimensional sensations, (e.g. differences in levels of pitch, etc.).<sup>3</sup> By our nature, he argues, we use numerous devices to compensate for this human deficiency. Three of the most important of these are:

- (a) to make relative rather than absolute judgments; or if that is not possible, (b) to increase the number of dimensions along which the stimuli can differ; or (c) to arrange the task in such a way that we make a sequence of several absolute judgments in a row."<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Miller argues that we "recode" "bits of information" into more "manageable chunks". Through this simplification or symbolization process Miller argues that we are capable of dealing with complex perceptions.<sup>5</sup>

DeTocqueville develops the notion of "general ideas" to explain how the human mind can compensate for its perceptual inadequacies. The usage of general ideas allows the human mind to see similarities in diverse perceptions which would otherwise be "lost in the wilderness of detail". Moreover, these general ideas "permit human minds to pass judgment quickly on a great number of things; but the conceptions they convey are always incomplete and what is gained in extent is always lost in inexactitude."<sup>6</sup>

These "general ideas" are to be found in the common usage of language. As Landau argues:

All languages typify and categorize and we need no reminder that ordinary language does so in a crude, ambiguous, and often contradictory manner--and that the observations it directs are of a similar character.<sup>7</sup>

If ordinary language is so "crude" and "ambiguous", then it is important that the political scientist sharpen ordinary language to make it more exact. But two basic problems occur in this sharpening process. The first is the problem of relevancy. When a political scientist develops concepts, they must be relevant to the concrete structures of interaction he is observing. The term, concept, is applied in this context to describe a set of characteristics or attributes.<sup>8</sup> The intension of the concept is delimited by its correct definition. The extension of the concept is

is defined by the "class of all actual or existent things which the term (i.e., concept) correctly applies to or names."<sup>9</sup> The methodology of a scientific inquiry is the way in which the intensive characteristics of concepts are organized and applied to the observable concrete political structures of interaction.<sup>10</sup> The basic problem with the use of methodologies is the potential of incongruities between the conceptions used by the political observer and the characteristics of the observable phenomena.

The second problem in the use of concepts is that they tend to become rigidified. Because of the potential for incongruities, (as noted above), it is important that the scientific observer not mistake the qualities of the concept for those observed. The scientific discipline is based upon flexibility and initiative, and it is dangerous, and often a source of distortion, when these qualities are lost.<sup>11</sup> Thus, as Landau points out:

Care must be exercised that they (concepts) do not harden and rigidify--a danger that always results when we forget that an analytic construction is not a thing in a material sense.<sup>13</sup>

Landau also points to the potential distorting effects of the use of metaphors in political science. He argues that metaphors are not only commonly used in political discussion; they are essential: "we could scarcely get along without them."<sup>14</sup> However, descriptive metaphors are a source of "distortion and misrepresentation." For the perceptions of properties imposed by the use of the metaphor may not have any direct correlation with the perception of the properties

which the metaphor is meant to describe. In short, the language used to describe perceptions of concrete behavior and events often structures the perception of the behaviors and events, rather than the inverse.<sup>14</sup>

An example of the implicit use of metaphor can be found in pluralist utilization of the idea of a marketplace to describe how the political process functions. As in a marketplace, there are many different leaders (i.e., sellers of wares) who both react to and pressure constituents, (i.e., consumers). Interest groups and individuals (i.e., buyers) come into the political decision-making process to use political resources in order to receive goods and services, (i.e., commodities). The political decision-making process, (i.e., the marketplace), is open to those who are willing to utilize their resources; however some individuals or groups only use their resources to directly specific issue areas which directly influence specific issue areas which directly affect them, (i.e., they only go to the marketplace on the days that there are specials on the commodities they wish to purchase). As in a marketplace, there are decisions, (i.e., transactions) made, and the method of analyzing who exerts power and/or influence involves the investigation of who makes decisions (transactions) and who benefits from these decisions, (e.g. the buyer or the seller). Like commodities, issues only exist in the political arena when they have commanded the "attention of a significant segment of the political stratum."<sup>15</sup> Rather than



extend this example, we can see that the implicit use of the marketplace metaphor has affected the pluralists' description of the political process.

Metaphorical description should be used as an organizational device to stimulate "a reorganization of thought that may be quite productive." In this way, the "metaphoric transfer--the substitution of analogy for actuality--may serve to reveal new attributes or disclose old ones in a new light, thereby adding to the corpus of our knowledge."<sup>16</sup>

Many metaphors, however, become reified or rigidified. In this case, the metaphoric transfer has taken effect and the metaphor is accepted as a literal description. "To take a metaphor literally", argues Landau, "is to create a myth and the more conventional myths become, the more difficult they are to dislodge."<sup>17</sup> Thus, Landau is not arguing against the use of metaphorical descriptions; rather, he is arguing for the proper usage of metaphors to represent that which has been deliberately conceptualized.

We can now see that whether we call our generalized descriptions, "manageable chunks of information", "general ideas", concepts, or metaphorical descriptions, an indeterminacy exists in the correlation between the observer's descriptions of his perceptions, the observer's actual perceptions, and the concrete behavior and events perceived. The importance of these distinctions amounts to the increasing simplicity and decreasing precision as we follow the line from the "objective", and observable "reality" to the perceptions of this "reality", and to the description of

these perceptions. In this way, both perceptual and descriptive inadequacies limit both the number and type of variables and concepts which can be analyzed by any one observer.

However, this is not to say that analytic simplicity should be maximized; rather, the acceptance of these limitations points to the indeterminacy of the correlation of our perceptions and descriptions of political phenomena. Thus, even though a political process may be complex, we may not be able to perceive or to describe all or any of the complexities of that process.

## STRUCTURES OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS

While the relevance of the Kuhnian notion of a paradigm to the "science" of politics has been subject to serious debate, there appears to be little evidence with which to counter the hypothesis that various analytical frameworks are accepted by a part of or a majority of the community of political scientists. For our purposes, here, an analytic framework may be defined as an accepted theoretical or empirical method which is used to approach the study of various aspects of the political process, or of political analysis.

While a complete investigation into the complexity of analytic frameworks is not possible within the constraints of this essay, it will be useful for our analysis of pluralism to investigate how the structures of analytic frameworks differ in terms of complexity.

The complexity of the analytic framework is contingent upon the number of variables that fit into the conceptualization and (2) the openness to different types of observable phenomena.

The complexity of the structure of analytic frameworks is contingent upon (1) the number and differentiation of frameworks allowed within the confines of the academic community; (3) the relational interdependencies of frameworks, (e.g., the lack of any prevailing or predominate framework and the presence of competing frameworks); (4) variability of frameworks over time to make them more relevant to existing

political knowledge.

It is my contention that we can describe pluralist and anti-pluralist analyses as two different structures of analytic frameworks. I will attempt to demonstrate that the structure of pluralist, analytic frameworks is simpler than that of the anti-pluralist, analytic frameworks. While any one political theorist or scientist may utilize one or many analytic frameworks, the categorization of political theorists and scientists into the categories of pluralist and anti-pluralist involves a structure of analytic frameworks.

PLURALISM: STRUCTURAL ~~COMPLEXITY~~ SIMPLICITY OF ANALYTIC FRAMEWORKS

Underlying the structure of analytic frameworks utilized by pluralists is a general consensus on how power and/or influence should be studied. I will attempt to point out this consensus by describing the methods used by Dahl, Polsby and Banfield.<sup>18</sup>

The underlying assumption taken by these three theorists is that the political analyst must study the actual exercise of power and/or influence. By so doing, they attempted to make the distinction between potential and actual power. As Banfield states, "it is necessary to observe influence 'at work' rather than 'in repose'".<sup>14</sup> Dahl argues that the "potential power a ~~man~~<sup>man</sup> enjoys bears no necessary relationship to actual power he wields."<sup>20</sup>

To determine the actual power exerted by individuals and groups, pluralists assume that the decision-making process must be analyzed. As Polsby contends:

It is possible to distinguish three kinds of data with respect to decision-making which often serve as indices of the power of actors: one may ask (1) who participates in decision-making, (2) who gains and who loses from alternative possible outcomes, and (3) who prevails in decision-making.<sup>21</sup>

Or in the words of Dahl, community power must be studied by a "careful examination of a series of concrete decisions."<sup>22</sup>

Because of the difficulty in analyzing the vast number of decisions made in the political process, pluralists find it necessary to select "important decisions". While Banfield and Dahl give us little criteria upon which to base this

selection, Polsby is quite explicit:

1. How many people are affected by outcomes,
2. How many different kinds of community resources are distributed by outcomes,
3. How much in amount of resources are distributed by outcomes,
4. How drastically present community resource distributions are altered by outcomes. 23

Furthermore, the pluralists believe that it is necessary to "examine a set of 'decisions' in different 'issue areas' in order to determine what kinds of people were the most influential." 24

From this brief outline of pluralist methodology, we can see there is little differentiation among analytic frameworks utilized by pluralists. Within the structure of pluralism, then, there is a dominant analytic framework which has little variation over the time in which these books were written. For these reasons we may say that the structure of analytic frameworks is simple.

# ANTI-PLURALISM: STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY OF ANALYTIC FRAMEWORKS

The complexity of the structure of the anti-pluralists' analytic framework, (as opposed to that of the pluralists') may be seen as a result of the anti-pluralists' dissatisfaction with the pluralists' emphasis on the examination of the decision-making process to determine the extent to which power is exercised in the political arena. While anti-pluralists agree that a close evaluation of the decisions made is merited, they see it as only "one face of power."

Bachrach and Baratz, in their article, "Two Faces of Power",<sup>25</sup> argue that~~the~~ analytic framework of pluralism does not take into account the fact that political power is often used to narrow the scope of the decision-making process. As we saw in the pluralists' analytic framework, the exercise of political power was examined by an investigation of the decision-making process. As Bachrach and Baratz argue:

Power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented for practical purposes, from bring to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the anti-pluralists argue that by only examining the issues decided upon in the political process, the extent to which the political observer can investigate the actual exercise of power is severely limited.

However, does the study of "non-issues", (i.e., those which do not enter the decision-making process) affect the so-called "science" of politics? Pluralists, such as Polsby

argue that the emphasis of political science on "non-events", rather than "policy-making events" presents "insuperable obstacles to research." "For every event, (no matter how defined) that occurs there must be an infinity of alternatives."<sup>27</sup> Polsby argues that as the number of "non-events" makes research difficult, the necessary question emerges: "which non-events are to be regarded as significant?"<sup>28</sup> Who is to determine the "real" importance of an issue which does not enter the political process?

A wholly unsatisfactory answer would be: certain non-events stipulated by outside observers without reference to the desires or activities of community residents.<sup>29</sup>

However, Polsby does concede that a satisfactory answer to this question can be determined by examining a "significant" number of citizen demands which were not acted upon in the political process.<sup>30</sup>

The structural complexity of the anti-pluralists' analytic framework is, in part, a result of the differing methods of examining the factor of non-decision-making. For our purposes, here, it is not possible to cover all of the ways in which the pluralists have attempted to analyze the 'two faces of power'. Instead, I will attempt to outline some of the more important ways of analyzing the constraints of the political process which have been utilized by anti-pluralists.

One method of analyzing community power relations advanced by Crensen attempts to find a correlation between "the neglect of air pollution issues and characteristics of local political leaders or institutions."<sup>31</sup> While he admits that any categorical



statement concerning the importance of air pollution would perforce be "value-laden", he attempts to determine the "issue-ness of air pollution by making a comparative study of 51 American cities. By tabulating the results of a survey of ten community leaders--mayors, chamber of commerce presidents, etc.--from each city, he attempts to make statistical relationships "between the neglect of the air pollution issue and the political characteristics of local leaders and institutions." <sup>32a</sup>

Another method, used by Greenstone and Peterson in Race and Authority in Urban Politics, <sup>33</sup> involves a comparison of the implementation of the Community Action Program in five major cities--New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Detroit. Through this comparative analysis they attempt to test some of the pluralist assumptions and conclusions and to study the "plurality of forces that bear upon policy questions." <sup>34</sup> Although the results of this important study of urban politics will be discussed in section three, it is important to note that they include in their analytic framework such variables as social role interests and associated ideologies, race relationships, regime interests and ideologies of machine and reform politicians, social "representativeness of leaders", relationship between bureaucratic efficiency and citizen participation, and consensual and conflictual bargaining methods. <sup>35</sup>

In his account of Atlanta politics, Clarence Stone <sup>36</sup> attempts to show that there is a "system bias" which gives

certain groups a "positional advantage" in the political process. By studying the issue of urban renewal, over a 20-year period, (1950-70) Stone directs his attention to the way in which the political system converts citizen demands. To do this, he investigates the less observable characteristics of concrete behavior such as the mobilization of popular support, official disposition on proposals, and the implementation stage. In this way, he attempts to demonstrate the constraints of the political system by examining the capacity of groups to "bring about or prevent change." 37

Thus, we can see that there are a number of different methods of analyzing urban and community power relationships in the political process. The difficulty of examining the constraints of a particular political process has tended to allow for competing analytic frameworks within the anti-pluralist structure. Moreover, many of the anti-pluralists make little attempt to refute the pluralist theory of politics, rather, for the most part they are in the process of altering and revising the pluralist theory to concur with their empirical findings. Through this revisionist process anti-pluralists have added to the corpus of our knowledge of urban and community political processes. For these reasons we can see that the structure of analytic frameworks utilized by anti-pluralists is more complex than that used by pluralists.

However, it is important to note that (as was pointed out in the first part of this section) our methods of

analyzing concrete structures of interaction are limited by the inadequacies of our perceptual capacities. By attempting to examine the less overt behavior of individuals and groups, our methods of investigation tend to envelop erroneous observations. As we will see in the following section, the different methodologies used by pluralists and anti-pluralists have resulted in different descriptions of the political process. Because of the indeterminacies involved in our methods of observation, it is important that we not completely discount either description of the political process.

### SECTION III: DESCRIPTIVE COMPLEXITY

Public policy is formulated through bargaining and negotiation among a plurality of individual, groups, agencies, and interests. No single proposition in the literature on American domestic policy formation has been so convincingly argued, elaborated, and documented.<sup>1</sup>

In this section, I will examine some of the descriptions of the concrete structures of political interaction made by descriptive pluralists and anti-pluralists. This distinction between descriptive pluralists and anti-pluralists should not be confused with any normative statements concerning the political process. This is not to say that the descriptions of the political process made by pluralists and anti-pluralists are by any means "objective;" rather, for the purposes of this essay, an analytical distinction between descriptions and prescriptions is helpful. Important to note is that it is not possible within the constraints of this paper to analyse all of the pluralists and anti-pluralists. As was done in the previous section, certain of these political scientists will be selected.

As noted at the outset of this essay, the descriptive pluralists and anti-pluralists will be discussed in terms of complexity. This is not to say that any political scientist or theorist describing political complexity is considered a pluralist, for this definition would be so broad as to lose its specificity.

## DESCRIPTIVE COMPLEXITY: PLURALISM

This discussion of descriptive pluralists will center around the works of Dahl and Polsby.<sup>2</sup> While their descriptions of the political process are somewhat different, I will attempt to emphasize their similarities.

By analysing the political process through an investigation of the decision-making process, the descriptive pluralists find that the political stratum is open to any dissatisfied group.

As Dahl argues:

The independence, penetrability, and heterogeneity of the various segments of the political stratum all but guarantee that any dissatisfied group will find spokesmen in the political stratum, but to have a spokesman does not insure that the group's problems will be solved by political action.<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of our discussion of descriptive pluralists, I will attempt to outline / <sup>the reasons</sup> why the pluralists make this contention.

Pluralists assume that the actual power exercised by citizens in the political process bears no relationship with their actual power resources. This assumption is important to their conclusions in that they admit that there is considerable inequalities in the distribution of economic resources within the community. In examining the decision-making process, they find that the political stratum was "dominated by many different sets of leaders, each having access to a different combination of political resources."<sup>4</sup> In this way, resources tend to be distributed unequally, but "no one influence resource dominates all the others in all or even most key decisions."<sup>5</sup>

Polsby also argues that decision-makers are not an ingrown elite; rather, he asserts that "there is a good deal of evidence

that decision-makers become so by self-selection--pushing themselves into the leadership group by showing interests, willingness to work, and competence."<sup>6</sup> Thus, we can see from the descriptions of the pluralists that there are many different interest groups and leaders within the political stratum. But, if we are to see the pluralist description of the political process as complex, then, there must be interdependence within the structure.

Polsby argues that the skillful political leader is adept in the "processes of bargaining, negotiation, salesmanship, and brokerage, and of leadership in mobilizing resources of all kinds."<sup>7</sup> Thus, as Dahl observes:

The relationship between leaders and citizens in a pluralistic democracy is frequently reciprocal: leaders influence the decisions of constituents, but the decisions of leaders are also determined in part by what they think are, will be, or have been the preferences of their constituents.<sup>8</sup>

Dahl also argues, though, that not all of the citizens are involved in the political stratum. How are they to have any influence on the decisions of the leaders? Dahl/~~circumvents~~ attempts to answer this question by making the distinction between direct and indirect influence. By direct influence, interest groups and individuals make demands, and political leaders respond to them. Indirect influence is defined by the electoral power of citizens who are and/<sup>those</sup> who are not involved directly in interest-group politics. Since the political leader is mindful of his electoral interests, he will generally act in accordance with his perception of his electoral interests.

Overlapping memberships of groups is another way in which

individuals within the political strata are interdependent. As Dahl points out:

...the man who is a party politician in one role may, in another, be a member of a particular interest group, social stratum, neighborhood, race, ethnic group, occupation, or profession.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, the individual will have different types of dependencies. As a political leader, he has to regard his electoral interests and coalitions of supporting interest groups. As a member of his neighborhood organization he may help to generate an issue to aid their interests in an issue area where we would not customarily have any interest. Thus, the overlapping memberships of groups tends to make the incidence of interdependencies within the political strata more frequent.

Perhaps most important for the pluralists, issues, resources, leadership roles, interest-group coalitions, etc., all vary over time. Thus, "pluralists hold that power may be tied to issues, and issues can be fleeting or persistent, provoking coalitions among interested groups and citizens ranging in their duration from momentary to semi-permanent."<sup>10</sup>

According to our definition of structural complexity, we can see that the pluralists describe the political process as complex, in that there are many different individuals, interest groups and leaders involved in the political process; the incidence of relational interdependencies are relatively frequent; and all of these factors vary over time. In this way, we can see that Dahl's conclusion is a description of political complexity:

Neither the prevailing consensus, the creed, nor even the political system itself are immutable products of democratic ideas, beliefs, and institutions inherited from the past. For better or worse, they are always open, in some measure, to alteration through those complex processes of symbiosis and change that constitute the relations of leaders and citizens in a pluralistic democracy.<sup>11</sup>

#### DESCRIPTIVE SIMPLICITY: ANTI-PLURALISM

Descriptive anti-pluralists will be analysed in terms of their description of the simplicity of concrete structures of political interaction. I have used the term, descriptive simplicity, because of their analytical emphasis upon the constraints in the political process. I do not mean to imply that either their analyses or descriptions of the political structure is simplistic or unsophisticated; nor do I mean to imply that we may characterize their descriptions in any degree of absolute simplicity.

Anti-pluralists have attempted to modify, revise, and sometimes to refute the pluralists' descriptions of political complexity. They tend to reject the notion that the political process is completely open to interest groups, and argue that various factors within the political structure act to limit the effectiveness of interest-group participation.

Crensen argues that the political system has consistently narrowed the scope of decision-making and has neglected the "real" importance of the air-pollution issue. While the decision-making process appears to be disjointed, Crensen contends that "there is a general bias or direction in this disjointedness. Decisionmaking is channeled and restricted by the process of



non-decisionmaking."<sup>12</sup>

As noted in section two, the pluralists' analytic framework did not examine the political "non-issue." For, according to the pluralists, there are no objective criteria by which to judge the significance of an issue which does not reach the decision-making process. Furthermore, since they found that the biases of decision-making were non-cumulative and crosscutting, they considered the political process to be relatively fair.

Although Crenson's methods of judging the importance of the air-pollution "issue" are somewhat questionable, the significance of his study is to point out that there are political demands which are not incorporated into the political arena.

In his analysis of the urban renewal program in Atlanta, Clarence Stone argues that the political system is "biased." He defines the term in the following manner:

To the degree that system characteristics work consistently to favor the selection of top level officials with predilections to facilitate actions on some policy measures and impede actions on others, then the system may be said to be biased.<sup>13</sup>

By this definition, Stone directly counters the pluralist conception of non-cumulative and crosscutting biases. "System bias directs attention to the role that public officials play in advancing some interests at the expense of other no less active and directly affected interests.

An aspect of the political process which Stone directs his attention to is the way in which social demands are converted into political issues. Political success in the conversion process, he argues, is dependent upon "substantial, multiple, and expendable resources" and upon favorable circumstances."<sup>14</sup> Since the groups

supporting urban renewal had these resources and had the favorable circumstance of gaining official support for their position, the seemingly disjointed, incremental approach to planning in Atlanta consistently favored the renewal issue over <sup>the</sup> neighborhood renewal issue.

According to the "revisionist" theory advocated by Stone, officeholders are not the neutral arbiters of interest groups that the pluralists described; rather, they are likely to be advocates of some group interests.

In Stone's case study, the officials promoted the urban renewal project even when the social dislocations caused by the project gave rise to black protests. Rather than elaborate on Stone's case study, it is important to note that both Crensen and stone attempt to examine the "openness" of political structures to various "issues." Through their descriptions of the manifest constraints of the political structure, they have argued that the political arena is not a neutral bargaining ground for interest groups; rather, the political structure systematically limits the scope of decision-making to hinder, (if not prohibit), many different issues from emerging as "political issues."

In their wide ranging political analysis of the implementation of the Community Action Program, Greenstone and Peterson attempt to examine and to modify the descriptive complexity of the political process advocated by the pluralists. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to point out all of the various ways in which they have analysed and have described the constraints of the political structures in five major American cities, it will

be useful to describe some of the more salient factors of political constraints.

Greenstone and Peterson argue against against the direct application of the electoral interest model promulgated by the pluralists.<sup>15</sup> As we saw in the first part of this section, the pluralists argued that the political leader generally acts in accordance with his perception of his electoral interest. Greenstone and Peterson argue that there are several problems with this model. First, the political leader may not know what will or what will not affect his constituents' vote. It is always problematical to attempt to determine why someone acts in the way that they do; it is sometimes difficult or impossible to determine why individuals vote in a specific way.

Second, they advance the theory of individual ideologies which effect the "action-orientation" of the political leader. Although Greenstone and Peterson's categorization of ideologies has grave problems in ascertaining the reason why a leader (or mayor) acted in a certain way, it is an important attempt to explain a reason why leaders do not act according to electoral interests.

Another feature analyzed by Greenstone and Peterson is the effect of the role of autonomous bureaucracies upon the political system, and specifically upon the participating in the Community Action Program. Although they do not argue that every city has autonomous bureaucracies, they use an organic metaphor to contend that, "the more autonomous an organization, the more important is a mission for its survival."<sup>16</sup> In addition to, and sometimes a part of, the organizational "need" for survival, is the

performance of its/prescribed function. In the case of the autonomous bureaucracy, its primary function is the rationalization of decision-making.

However, as Greenstone and Peterson point out, "rationality and spontaneity ... are inherently in tension with each other."<sup>17</sup> The tension between rationality and spontaneity in politics points to two basic criticisms of/pluralism. <sup>concrete application of the theory of</sup> The first criticism which Greenstone and Peterson advance is that the autonomous bureaucracies tend to maximize "efficient" methods of governing at the expense of minimizing the importance of participation of individuals and groups in the process of government.

The second criticism, which is derived from the first, attacks one of the advantages/<sup>of participatory pluralism</sup> which has been argued by prescriptive pluralists. While this will be covered in the following section, it is helpful to note here, that one of the prescribed advantages of pluralism is that it allows for individuals and groups to feel as though they are a part of the governing process, and that participation in groups is essential for the educational-development of citizens. If the governmental policies are planned and carried out through autonomous bureaucracies, then this an argument that can be made by descriptive anti-pluralists who are also prescriptive pluralists.

From this analysis of some of the descriptive anti-pluralists we can see that their emphasis on the constraints of the governmental process is a way of describing the simplicity of this process. For the mobilization of bias, or system bias, disallows various issues and groups from gaining substantive access to the political

arena. The effect of ideological orientations of political leaders may decrease the interdependency between the politicians and their constituents. The effect of the rationalization of governmental policy by autonomous bureaucracies decreases the dependence of the bureaucracy upon partisan politics and upon citizen participation. The bias of the system, the positional advantage of particular groups, <sup>and</sup> the rationalization of politics may all be factors in decreasing the variability of the political process over time. Thus, for these reasons we have used the notion of descriptive simplicity to analyse the emphasis of the anti-pluralists' statements about how the political process functions.

#### SECTION FOUR: PRESCRIPTIVE COMPLEXITY

In this section I will attempt to demonstrate some of the reasons why prescriptive pluralists view the conception of political complexity as a normative principle to be maximized. I will also attempt to cover some of the reasons why prescriptive anti-pluralists have rejected the application of political complexity in American government. Here again, the constraints of this essay do not allow an extended exploration into these opposed viewpoints.

It is important to draw a distinction between descriptive and prescriptive pluralists and anti-pluralists. As shown in the previous section, descriptive anti-pluralists have attempted to modify, revise and sometimes to refute the descriptive pluralists' statements concerning the nature of political complexity. Prescriptive anti-pluralists, on the other hand, believe that the application of pluralism in government has undesirable results. In short, <sup>the central idea behind</sup> the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive anti-pluralists is the difference between the "is" and the "ought" statements. On the one hand, the descriptive anti-pluralists believe that pluralism does not work, and on the other, that it should not be applied to government.

Descriptive pluralists can also be prescriptive anti-pluralists, in that they view pluralistic democracy as political complexity, but do not believe that pluralistic complexity is desirable. The inverse also applies to some political scientists who are descriptive anti-pluralists and prescriptive pluralists.

However, for the purposes of this essay, and for the sake of clarity, I will only consider the prescriptive elements of

pluralists and anti-pluralists.

### PRESCRIPTIVE PLURALISTS

Prescriptive pluralists are those who view the pluralistic conception of political complexity as an ideal or as a normative principle. For the purposes of this analysis, I will cover three major reasons why the principle of pluralistic complexity should be furthered: (1) promotion of tolerance, (2) provision of neutral means of government, (3) socialization of citizenry through small groups.

The first contention of prescriptive pluralists is that the complexities of the political process promote tolerance in society and in government. Because of the multiple centers of power, no one group is able to gain hegemony, and thereby able to assert its interests and values upon others; rather, each group must respect the preferences of the other. Groups which are highly interdependent must respect the needs and desires of others and must allow for differences of opinion advanced by the other groups.

Moreover, since the interest groups which govern are based upon a subjective conception of interest, ~~there~~ no objective criteria can determine categorically that one group is wrong in its consideration of its own interest. The only exception to this would be when one group wanted more than its "share" of the goods and services. But even this exception has a ring of "relativity" about it; for one group's "share" can only be determined in relation to the "share" of another group. Thus,

the chiche, "everything is relative," has significance in this context, because of the lack of any objective criterion to judge absolutes.

The second argument made by prescriptive pluralists is that the pluralist system of government is a "morally neutral means for pursuing political ends."<sup>1</sup> In this view, "each individual plays a significant, and not simply symbolic role, in the political process of decision."<sup>2</sup> If the access to the political arena is virtually guaranteed to all groups, each groups will have the opportunity to play a part in making the laws to which everyone will obey. The process is not perfect in that not all laws made by this process will be good ones, but the process is a way of allowing people to govern themselves.

Perhaps Alexis de Tocqueville can be seen as the most important proponent of this idea of sustaining popular control over the governmental process. He argues that Americans, absorbed in the intricacies of their private affairs, often see little need for participation in public affairs. When the individual is asked to participate he assumes that the function of government is to "allow them to acquire the things they covet and will not debar them from the peaceful enjoyment of those possessions which they have already acquired."<sup>3</sup>

Often the individual believes that the strength of popular control over democratic institutions can be sustained without his effort. But as De Tocqueville points out, the predominance of such a belief will result in the control of government by the few over the many. The inattentive citizens fail to see that a



few "regulate everything by their own caprice."

Thus, this failure to attend to the common welfare results in the despotic rule of a few. In this way, the individual neglects to see that his failure to exercise effort in public affairs will eventually rob him of any semblance of conscious control over his own affairs. Even his thought can be manipulated by public opinion when he exclusively follows his narrow perception of his self-interest.

De Tocqueville sees that the political efficacy of the individual must be strengthened. Two basic means to this end are possible: (1) by giving the individual responsibility over public affairs and (2) by encouraging participation in political and civil associations.

First, by entrusting the self-interested individual with the administration of minor political affairs, his knowledge of the inter-relationship between his private interests and the common welfare increases. As his knowledge increases, so will his interest in public affairs. As he gains confidence of his political control over these small matters he will be convinced of his political efficacy. This will carry over to his confidence in associating with others for political goals.

Second, as the society becomes more complex, the individual must act in conjunction with others in associations to gain political efficacy. Although it is difficult to draw men out of their narrow circle of interests, Tocqueville states the importance of making the citizen aware of his relationship with the part of society that he does not normally see.

What are the pluralistic elements in Tocqueville's treatise? First, he emphasizes that the isolated individual, consumed with ambition for particularistic, economic gain, is politically powerless and that the individual is merely mistaken to believe that he can live apart from the community in which he resides. Second, he states the normative argument for popular control over government so that the few will not rule instead of the many. Third, his emphasis on the need for group action, instead of individual action, is particularly important for interest-group pluralism. For groups are<sup>considered</sup> the motive force in pluralistic government.<sup>4</sup>

The third argument utilized by prescriptive pluralists concerns the socialization of citizenry through small groups. In this view, they contend that<sup>the face-to-face relationships of</sup> small groups enable the member of that groups to develop personality and promote loyalty to the state. As Wolff points out:

In a large society, loyalty to the state must be built upon loyalty to a multiplicity of intra-social groups in which men can find the face-to-face contacts which sustain their personalities and reinforce their value-attitudes.<sup>5</sup>

Through<sup>membership in</sup> small groups the citizen may find a meaningful existence amid the complexities of modern society.

Thus, the theory of pluralism can be seen as a beneficent way of governing society according to a philosophy of equality and justice.

## PRESCRIPTIVE ANTI-PLURALISTS

In this discussion of the prescriptive anti-pluralists I will attempt to point out some of the criticisms of the three principles of pluralistic complexity advocated by the prescriptive pluralists: (1) tends to enforce conformity, (2) to discriminate in favor of elites, and (3) to eliminate public values from political consideration.<sup>6</sup>

First, the concrete application of pluralism tends to enforce conformity to the interests of established groups. Wolff argues that this conformity creates "a strange mixture of the greatest tolerance for what we might call established groups and an equally great intolerance for the deviant individual".<sup>7</sup> While this principle of intolerance for private individual differences is contrary to traditional liberalism, it is supported by the argument that "it is good for each individual to conform to some social group."<sup>8</sup>

However, this type of intolerance for individual differences tends to stifle initiative for change both within the group itself, and consequently, within the governmental structure. McConnell argues that voluntary associations and private groups tend to have explicit guidelines for membership and to have limited purposes. Because of these explicit guidelines for membership, the groups tends to have an homogeneous constituency. When these groups are in competition with each other, as they are in pluralistic democracy, they tend to enforce unanimity upon their members. As McConnell points out:

Strong distaste for anything less than unanimity seems to be one of the principal characteristics of private associations. Perhaps the most common response to disagreement when it does appear is to attempt to suppress it, either by appeals for unity or by more drastic means<sup>9</sup>

However, one of the most salient aspects of private associations is their voluntary nature: an individual has the choice whether or not to join. If pluralism is to be based upon the Voluntary associations, then it is important that the individual member has some conscious control over the group. If the individual does not have this control, how can pluralistic politics be anything more than congeries of decentralized oligarchies with the leaders of these "private groups" controlling its members.<sup>10</sup>

McConnell argues that if the Michelian "iron law of oligarchy" is applicable to the organization of private groups, then these groups can hardly be seen as the context in which citizens are capable of determining their own interests. While, he finds that the Michelian thesis is not overwhelmingly applicable to private groups, the important aspect of the nature of these groups is that the member has few means by which to combat the power exerted by oligarchic leadership. His one recourse is to resign. This option of resignation is what McConnell argues is one of the differences between group membership and national citizenship. As he points out:

Resignation is the individual's ultimate recourse and the element that finally distinguishes the private association from the public body.<sup>11</sup>

the

Thus, we can see that/conformity of the individual to the interests of the group is prevalent in the organization of interest-groups.

We can now see that intolerance for individual differences within groups is limited by the structure of the group. Limitations of the principle of tolerance, however, do not stop here. According to the theory of pluralism, no group can legitimately be left out of the bargaining process. If the political system does not allow certain groups, (eg., migrant workers), from entering the political arena, then the pluralist principles of equality and justice must be questioned. If these principles are not questioned, the political arena has illegitimate admission policy which differentiates between groups.

In this case, the limited admission illegitimately denigrates certain groups and viewpoints. Henry Kariel has convincingly argued that the government acts as a pluralist referee who "systematically favors the interests of the stronger against the weaker party in interest-group conflicts."<sup>12</sup> The "referee" then acts to consolidate the power of the stronger groups at the expense of the weaker ones. In this way, "legitimate," but organizationally weaker, interests are suppressed and defeated in the pluralistic "democracy." Wolff makes the analogy of the umpire in a baseball game to demonstrate this function:

It is as though an umpire were to come upon a baseball game in progress between big boys and little boys, in which the big boys cheated, broke the rules, claimed hits that were outs, and made the little boys accept the injustice by brute force. If the umpire undertakes to "regulate" the game by simply enforcing the "rules" actually being practiced, he does not thereby make the game a fair one. Indeed, he may actually make matters worse, because if the little boys get up their courage, band together, and decide to fight it out, the umpire will accuse them of breaking the rules and throw his weight against them!<sup>13</sup>

The third criticism of the application of the theory of pluralism to political structures is that it defends a narrow conception of rationality. "Concrete demands are held to be rational; whereas general demands are irrational."<sup>14</sup> Any notion of a "public interest" is seen as a ploy used to defend the narrow interests of an interest group.<sup>15</sup> If there is no accepted conception of the public interest by which to limit the demands of private interests, then there can be no formal check upon the concrete demands of interest groups. If the nature of politics is to construe limitations on the legitimate function of government, then the limitations of government will be determined by, and in the interests of, dominant interest groups.

The government cannot be formal or distinct "when it is broken into units corresponding to the interests which have developed power."<sup>16</sup> If the public interests is a viable goal to be attained, it must be accrued at the expense of interest groups which control the governmental process.

McConnell argues that public interests, can only result from national constituencies. Governmental responsibility to public interests can only exist when these interests are known and are pursued by large heterogeneous constituencies. "The meaning of responsibility is empty, unless the constituency to which responsibility is owed and actually paid is known,"<sup>17</sup> and is not obscured by narrowly constituted interest groups.

## CONCLUSION

In this essay I have attempted to demonstrate how the theory of pluralism can be viewed both as a description of, and as a prescription for political complexity. While the notion of complexity can entail many different ideas, I have attempted to primarily use this notion to describe how a pluralistic democracy is a complex process.

Although the topic I have chosen to discuss is extremely wide-ranging, I believe it is helpful in understanding pluralism as a form of political complexity. Perhaps useful in concluding this essay will be a summary of the basic points I have attempted to make in the four sections.

In the first section, I attempted to point out the conceptual possibilities of the notion of complexity and to question some of the views of rigidity which have been implied with some of the theories of complexity.

The second section explored some of the limitations of perceiving, describing and conceptualizing complexities. In this context, I attempted to differentiate the pluralist and anti-pluralist analytic frameworks by examining their methodologies with which they have analysed the political process.

The third section dealt with the descriptions of the political process. By using a simple analytic framework, the pluralists described the political system as complex. The anti-pluralists, on the other hand, used a relatively more complex analytic framework and described a relatively less complex political system than the pluralists.

The fourth section attempted to point out some of the

differences between the normative viewpoints of pluralists and anti-pluralists.

By taking such a broad approach to the theory of pluralism I had hoped to view this theory as a whole. But such a holistic approach is not possible within the given limitations of this analysis. However, in understanding a theory of politics I believe it is important that we look not merely at the analytic framework of the theory, or at the extension of the theory in describing political events, or at the prescriptions for the political process; rather, we should attempt to look at a broader picture in the hope of understanding both the complexity of the theory and that of the concrete behavior and events which the theory attempts to explain.

Unfortunately, the constraints of time and energy have limited the extent to which many of the ideas could be covered in this essay. The correlation I have attempted to make concerns the conceptual possibilities of complexity, the human limitations of perceiving and describing concrete structures of interaction, the analytic limitations of structures of political inquiry, and the descriptive and prescriptive elements of a particular type of inquiry. While it is difficult for me to judge the success of this essay in making this correlation, I would like to conclude with a quote from C. Wright Mills:

I can take a small portion of this very large topic and try to prove something about it in some detail; or I can take the whole topic and try to be merely provocative. Naturally I choose the second course, for one thing, it is more fun; and for another, we ought to try to reason together.



## FOOTNOTES:

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Andrew McFarland, Power and Leadership in Pluralist Systems, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), chap. 2. See also Martin Landau, "Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap," Public Administration Review, (July/August, 1969), pp. 346-358.

<sup>2</sup>McFarland, p.17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p.18.

<sup>4</sup>LaPorte, Organized Social Complexity, p.10

<sup>5</sup>Harlan Wilson, "The Idea of Complexity in Social and Political Theory," chap. 2. See also McFarland, chap. 2.

### Section I

<sup>1</sup>Harlan Wilson, chap. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Amitai Etzioni, The Active Society, (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p.314; See also Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Power and Poverty, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), chap. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Etzioni, p.315.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 357.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 357.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 357-8.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 359-60.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p 357.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 361ff.

<sup>13</sup>McFarland, chap. 2.

<sup>14</sup>LaPorte, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

## Footnotes (cont.)

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>c.f., Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)

<sup>19</sup>LaPorte, p.9.

Section II

<sup>1</sup>Harlan Wilson, chap 2.

<sup>2</sup>c.f., Gary Winner, chap. 2 in Organized Social Complexity, (ed) Laporte.

<sup>3</sup>George A. Miller, "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information," Psychological Review, March, 1956, pp. 81-97.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 90ff

<sup>6</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), p. 6., See Also, Wilson, chap. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Martin Landau, Political Theory and Political Science, New York: The MacMillan Co., 1972), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>9</sup>Steven Schwartz, "Introduction," Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds., (ed) Schwartz, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>Landau, Political Theory and Political Science, p. 178.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 81-2

<sup>15</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs?, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 92.

<sup>16</sup>Landau, p. 83.

## Footnotes (cont.)

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>18</sup>Dahl, Who Governs?; Nelson Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Edward Banfield, Political Influence, (New York: The Free Press, 1961).

<sup>19</sup>Banfield, p.9.

<sup>20</sup>David Ricci, Community Power and Democratic Theory: The Logic of Political Analysis, (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 126-7.

<sup>21</sup>Polsby, p.4.

<sup>22</sup>Robert Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," American Political Science Review, (June, 1958), p. 466.

<sup>23</sup>Polsby, p. 96.

<sup>24</sup>Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 331.

<sup>25</sup>Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Power and Poverty, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), chap. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>27</sup>Polsby, p. 97.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Matthew Crenson, The Un-Politics of Air Pollution, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 28.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>33</sup>David Greenstone and Paul Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973),

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., chap. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Clarence Stone, Economic Growth and Neighborhood Discontent, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976),

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-24.

## Footnotes (cont.)

Section III

<sup>1</sup>Paul Peterson, School Politics Chicago Style, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. xi.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs?; Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory.

<sup>3</sup>Dahl, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Dahl, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>6</sup>Polsby, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Dahl, pp. 89-90.

<sup>9</sup>Dahl, p. 93.

<sup>10</sup>Polsby, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup>Dahl, p. 325.

<sup>12</sup>Crenson, The Un-Politics of Air Pollution, p. 178.

<sup>13</sup>Stone, Economic Growth and Neighborhood Discontent, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>15</sup>Greenstone and Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics, chap. 5.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

## Footnotes (cont.)

Section IV

<sup>1</sup>Robert Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 132.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), vol. II, Chap. IX, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup>While Tocqueville is not generally considered an "interest-group pluralist, many of the arguments used by prescriptive pluralists are derived from his prescient account of American democracy.

<sup>5</sup>Wolff, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup>Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 156.

<sup>7</sup>Wolff, p. 149.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>McConnell, p. 151.

<sup>10</sup>c.f., Ibid., pp. 144-5.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>12</sup>Wolff, p. 156.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>14</sup>McConnell, p. 355.

<sup>15</sup>c.f. Richard Flathman, The Public Interest, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), chap. 1.

<sup>16</sup>McConnell, p. 365.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

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